

AP & UPI TICKER TAKE

OCTOBER 3 BY JEAN HELLER

WASHINGTON (AP)--AUTOPSY PROCEDURES CONNECTED WITH A CONTROVERSIAL 40-YEAR FEDERAL SYPHILIS EXPERIMENT IN ALABAMA HAVE QUIETLY ENDED.

THE ACTION CAME SEVERAL WEEKS AGO WHEN THE PATHOLOGIST WHO HAD BEEN PERFORMING THE AUTOPSIES REFUSED TO HAVE ANYTHING FURTHER TO DO WITH THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE SYPHILIS EXPERIMENT, CALLED THE TUSKEGEE STUDY. ITS EXISTENCE WAS DISCLOSED IN JULY.

THE COST OF THE AUTOPSIES AND SUBSEQUENT BURIAL OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE TUSKEGEE STUDY HAS BEEN UNDERWRITTEN FOR THE PAST 40 YEARS BY THE MILBANK MEMORIAL FUND, A PHILANTHROPIC FOUNDATION WITH HEADQUARTERS IN NEW YORK.

DR. LEROY E. BURNEY, PRESIDENT OF THE FOUNDATION AND A FORMER U.S. SURGEON GENERAL SAID IN AN INTERVIEW TUESDAY HE WAS NOTIFIED SEVERAL WEEKS AGO THAT NO FURTHER AUTOPSIES WOULD BE PERFORMED.

DR. DONALD PIROZZI, AN OFFICIAL AT THE PHS' CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL IN ATLANTA WHICH SUPERVISES THE EXPERIMENT, CONFIRMED THAT THE AUTOPSIES HAVE BEEN PERMANENTLY HALTED.

"WE WERE NOTIFIED THAT THE PATHOLOGIST WHO HAD BEEN PERFORMING THE AUTOPSIES AT THE TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE REFUSED TO DO ANY MORE," PIROZZI SAID. "WE GO ALONG WITH THAT. THAT'S FINE."

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PIROZZI SAID THE PHS WOULD MAKE NO EFFORT TO FIND ANOTHER DOCTOR TO TAKE THE PATHOLOGIST'S PLACE. NEITHER BURNEY NOR PIROZZI IDENTIFIED THE PATHOLOGIST.

DURING THE COURSE OF THE TUSKEGEE STUDY, BEGUN IN 1932, MORE THAN 430 SYPHILITIC BLACK MEN FROM THE TUSKEGEE, ALA., AREA NEVER RECEIVED TREATMENT FOR THEIR DISEASE SO THAT PHS DOCTORS COULD DETERMINE THROUGH EVENTUAL AUTOPSIES WHAT DAMAGE THE UNTREATED SYPHILIS HAD DONE.

AT LEAST 28 OF THE MEN DIED AS A DIRECT RESULT OF UNTREATED SYPHILIS.

THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE, THE PHS PARENT AGENCY, CURRENTLY HAS THE TUSKEGEE STUDY UNDER INVESTIGATION.

WHILE AUTOPSY PROCEDURES HAVE BEEN ENDED, THE MILBANK FUND WILL CONTINUE TO UNDERWRITE THE COST-OF-BURIAL FOR TUSKEGEE STUDY PARTICIPANTS.

"IT'S A COMMITMENT, A PROMISE WE MADE TO THE MEN INVOLVED," BURNEY SAID, "WHETHER THE STUDY IS CONTINUED OR NOT, WE WILL TRY TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE TO CONTINUE PAYING THE BURIAL EXPENSES."

THE TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE IS A NEARLY ALL-BLACK UNIVERSITY ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE TUSKEGEE. L. M. FOSTER, THE SCHOOL'S PRESIDENT, SAID IN AN INTERVIEW THAT THE INSTITUTE DOES NOT HAVE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE SYPHILIS EXPERIMENT, BUT HAS PERMITTED USE OF ITS FACILITIES FOR THE AUTOPSIES AND HAS ACTED AS A FISCAL AGENT FOR THE MILBANK FUND.

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